Oswald Was a Lone Gunman

The Warner Brothers-Oliver Stone film "JFK" claims that the U.S. government covered up the truth about the assassination of President Kennedy. The evidence does not support this position. I should know. I have more firsthand knowledge about the key witnesses and physical evidence of the assassination of President Kennedy than anyone else. I am the only person in the world who has had access to everything in the Warren Commission files and CIA files about the assassination.

This newspaper has also challenged the veracity of "JFK." In its Dec. 27 edito-

Counterpoint

By David W. Belin

rial, the Journal accurately concluded that what Oliver Stone "is basically selling . . . is political grotesquery itself." Unfortunately, the Journal also made some serious errors in its analysis of the Kennedy assassination. The Journal has made an assertion that is patently false, alleging that ". . . the Warren Commission Report . . . was less intent on truth than in unifying the nation, and now the nation pays a price in Mr. Stone's hype."

Not content with that major error, the Journal editorial illustrated a lack of understanding of the overwhelming evidence in the Warren Commission Report proving that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman who killed President Kennedy and who 45 minutes later killed Dallas Police Officer J.D. Tippit. It asserts: "Anyone who wants to know what rocks the Warren Commission left unturned, though, should not turn to Mr. Garrison. Instead, read Edward J. Epstein, author of 'Inquest,' a critique of the Commission." Alas, Mr. Epstein himself is a conspiracy sensationalist whose central thesis, like "JFK," depends upon a misrepresentation of the record.

In "Inquest," Mr. Epstein writes that it is "extremely doubtful that the throat wound [of President Kennedy] was caused by the first bullet to strike the President" because Secret Service Agent Roy Kellerman, "who was in the front seat of the President's limousine, testified that he distinctly heard the President say, 'My God, I am hit,' after the first shot. Since the projectile that caused the throat wound also punctured the windpipe, it is medically highly improbable that the President could speak after he received the throat wound."

Although Mr. Epstein correctly quotes the testimony of Kellerman, he does not quote the heart of the testimony of the four other people in the presidential limousine: Secret Service agent William Greer, Gov. John Connally, Nellie Connally and Jacqueline Kennedy. Mr. Greer testified: "I never heard him say anything." Nellie Connally testified that President Kennedy "made no utterance, no cry." Gov. Connally testified, "He never uttered a sound at all." Jacqueline Kennedy said, "I was looking this way, to the left, and I heard these terrible noises. And my husband never made any sound."

As for the Journal's allegation that the Warren Commission "was less intent on truth than in unifying the nation," that is hogwash. I was one of the people selected by Earl Warren to serve as counsel to his commission. One of the most vivid memories of my professional career is our first meeting, when he uttered five words I will never forget: "Truth is our only goal."

We took him at his word. That is one of the reasons why, after being thwarted inside the Warren Commission by the chief justice himself, who did not want to use lie detector tests, I went around the commission and contacted Jack Ruby's rabbi, Hillel Silverman. I was able to persuade him to persuade Jack Ruby to ask for a lie detector test. The test was given and, although such tests are not 100% reliable, it did confirm Ruby's testimony that he was not part of any conspiracy.

Nowhere in "JFK" does the audience hear about Ruby's request, the results of that test, or Rabbi Silverman's testimony that he is convinced, based on his intimate conversations with Jack Ruby in jail, that Ruby was conspiratorially innocent.

Also ignored in "JFK" is the fact Robert Kennedy had someone from the Justice Department, Howard Willens, serve both as a counsel to the Warren Commission and as liaison with Justice.

Robert Kennedy wanted to know who killed his brother. Edward Epstein asserts there was more than one gunman and the Stone film asserts "triangulation"—that is, two other gunmen firing, in addition to Oswald (although Mr. Stone would have us believe that Oswald did not fire a rifle or pistol at anyone—not even Tippit). Surely, Robert Kennedy would have wanted every gunman brought to justice. But that common-sense conclusion is never raised in "JFK" or "Inquest."

Similarly, "JFK" and Mr. Epstein ignore the fact there were six witnesses who identified Oswald as the gunman they saw at the Tippit murder scene or running away from it with gun in hand. He was caught with the murder weapon, which he pulled out when police approached him in the Texas movie theater.

The Tippit murder is the Rosetta Stone to the solution of the assassination. "JFK" ignores virtually all the salient facts of this murder that conclusively show Oswald's guilt. Mr. Epstein's "Inquest" also ignores the massive weight of the evidence that shows Oswald killed Tippit.

If the Journal had been true to its lofty standards, it would have gone to the bedrock of the Warren Commission Report and exposed some of the more than 100 major lies and coverups in "JFK." Mr. Stone repeatedly uses the same kind of selectivity as Mr. Epstein in misrepresenting the overall record, and these misrepresentations are compounded by promotional appearances of "JFK" actors on TV.

If more examples are needed to show the depth of the Warren Commission Report, one can turn to the well-known picture of Oswald holding a pistol and a rifle. Oswald claimed he never owned a rifle, and "JFK" joins with Oswald in charging that the picture was a fabrication—Oswald's head placed on someone else's body holding a rifle and a gun.

In fact, there is absolute proof that the picture is genuine because Oswald's camera was found. There are minute differences in the manufacturing process of every camera. If one has a negative, it can be scientifically determined with 100% accuracy—just as in the case of a fingerprint—whether that negative came from that camera, to the exclusion of all other cameras in the world. That photograph, indeed, came from Oswald's camera. Why does "JFK" ignore that evidence?

I believe the remaining small portion of unreleased Warren Commission files and everything in the CIA files about the assassination should be released to the public. In 1975 I filed Freedom of Information Act requests to that effect.

In fact, though, all the documents needed to analyze this case are already available. I look forward to the time when newspapers such as The Wall Street Journal take the time to examine fairly the Warren Commission Report in depth. Indeed, not only was truth our only goal, but we found that truth: Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman who killed President Kennedy and Officer J.D. Tippit on that tragic Friday afternoon in Dallas, Nov. 22, 1963.

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